



A

Naturalist

in Brazil

KONRAD GUENTHER

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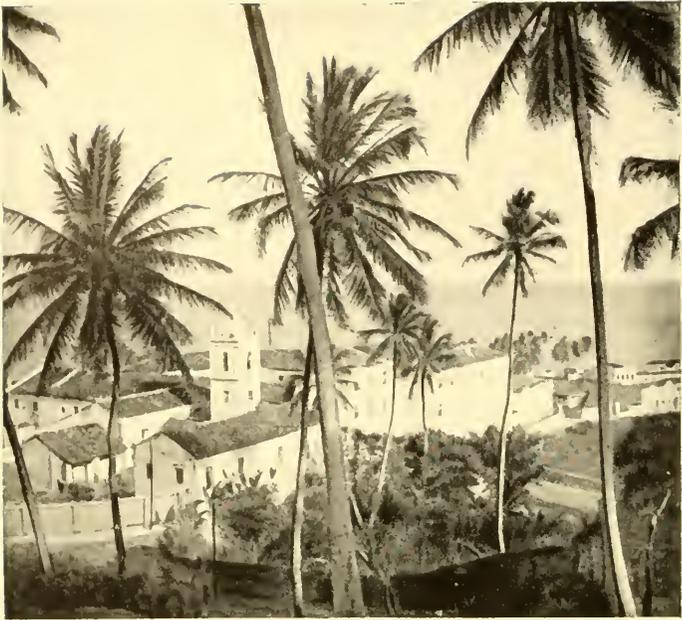
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A NATURALIST IN BRAZIL







THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY, OLINDA



SEASHORE NEAR TAMANDARÉ, PERNAMBUCO

# A NATURALIST IN BRAZIL

*The Record of a Year's Observation of her Flora  
her Fauna, and her People*

BY

KONRAD GUENTHER

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TRANSLATED BY

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*With Illustrations*



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TO MY KINDLY HOSTS  
THE VERY REVEREND FATHERS SUPERIOR OF THE  
BENEDICTINE MONASTERIES

D. PETRUS ROESER  
ABBOT IN OLINDA

D. PETRUS EGGERATH  
ARCH-ABBOT IN RIO

D. MICHAEL KRUSE  
ABBOT IN SÃO PAULO

IN HEARTFELT GRATITUDE  
AND FRIENDSHIP



DURING the year of my sojourn in Brazil, and my subsequent visit of some months to the Argentine, and on the voyage out, I met with so much kindness and hospitality that I can name only a few of my good friends, though they may rest assured that none of them are forgotten.

My first relations with Brazil were due to Fräulein Elsa Schwab, of Parahyba, and Professor de Barros, whose friendly hospitality I subsequently enjoyed at his home in Parahyba. To the Secretary of State of Pernambuco, Dr. Samuel Hardman, who invited me to Brazil, and in whom I always found sympathy for and understanding of my work, I express my thanks elsewhere.

For the greater part of the time I enjoyed the hospitality of the Benedictine monasteries, to whose Abbots this book is therefore dedicated; but I have grateful memories also of the Franciscans in Olinda, Bahia, Rio, Petropolis and São Paulo, and of the Benedictine nuns in Misericórdia and Caruarú. For weeks I lived in the home of my good friend Dr. P. A. Nusse and his kindly Portuguese wife; in São Paulo—during the difficult days of the Revolution—I enjoyed the hospitality of Herr Alfred and Frau Alice Weissflog and my dear "Lion"; and in Buenos Aires the time spent with my friend and colleague in the protection of natural beauties, Professor Hugo Salomon, and his wife and daughter, made a happy conclusion to a delightful visit. I must also express my gratitude to my kind friend, Dr. Virginia Rodrigues, and her children, in Olinda, and to Senhor and Senhora A. O. Coimbra, Herr and Frau Böckmann, and Herr and Frau A. Krönke, who literally made me feel at home. In Rio, Herr Kurl and Frau Elizabeth Runge and her daughter Gisela were most kind to me, and in São Paulo Herr Richers. I must thank the German Minister, Dr. Plehn, and the German Consuls in Recife, Rio, São Paulo, and Santos, for their kindly assistance, and the German clubs for their friendly hospitality. Among the scientists and scholars of Brazil, I must thank Dr. Lutz, Dr. Costa Lima and Father Borgmeier (O.F.M.) in Rio, Herrn Lüderwald, Hoehne and Decher in São Paulo, and Professor Lehmann Nitsche in La Plata for many interesting hours. And I do not forget the hours spent with Herr Arp, Dr. Regendanz, Dr. Christoffel, and above all, my friend Dr. E. Bethke.



## P R E F A C E

THE German title of this book is *Das Antlitz Brasiliens*—"The Face of Brazil." The "face" of the country is its landscape, its flora, its fauna: all that we include by the word "Nature." These things constitute its most eloquent and impressive speech, and to those who can hear it—and to them alone—the country reveals its greatest beauty, and the intimate secrets of its being.

He who wishes to derive both enjoyment and profit from a voyage to Brazil must above all become intimate with the natural life of the country. After all, what is it that he most of all wants to know? He wants, I think, to know the name of those great scarlet flowers; and what sort of palms those are that overlook the housetops; and how one can best enjoy a sight of monkeys, parrots and humming-birds. But as yet he has no conception of the wonders which are revealed by an insight into the lives of the orchids and the insects! The best Brazilian "Baedeker" will therefore be a guide to the flora and fauna of Brazil. And the task which the author has proposed to himself in the writing of this book is to produce such a guide.

But the glittering virgin forests, the sun-steeped wildernesses, the sea-beaches overshadowed by rustling palm-trees, invariably offered me, when I went forth each day with renewed expectation, so much that was new and lovely and fascinating, that I very soon formed the resolve to share what I had felt and seen with those for whom a voyage to Brazil is impracticable. My own visit to that country followed upon an invitation from the Government of the State of Pernambuco; my task was to combat the insects which were injuring the plantations. My work led me first into the interior of the north-eastern States, and later southwards, to São Paulo and Jahú. It not only gave me an insight into all the branches of Brazilian agriculture and colonization; it led also to friendly intercourse with the Brazilians, so that I was able to complete my description of the country and its civilization by some account of the character and the customs of its human inhabitants.

This book, therefore, is based on my own personal experiences, just as the illustrations in the text are sketches from my own pen, while the photographs are enlargements from my own negatives (I used a stereoscopic camera, the plates being 4·5 by 10·7 cm.). But it has not been my aim to give a description of my travels. I wish rather that my own experiences might enable me to transport

the reader bodily into the scenes which I have described, and enable him to make such discoveries as I made myself. Even the expert, I hope, may find something new in these pages. And to this end I have kept all personalities in the background, in order that Nature may speak with her own mighty voice. In each chapter the image of a landscape is revealed in the harmonious co-operation of its flora and fauna, with all its characteristic colours and voices and perfumes. Sixteen years ago I was able, in the same way, to study the Indian island of Ceylon, so that comparisons between the two tropical countries inevitably suggested themselves; I was able to define their characteristic features; and thus my book deals not merely with the flora and fauna of Brazil, but also, in a certain degree, with tropical Nature in general; so that I hope it may be equally welcome to the ordinary reader and to the scientist. And if at times the image of my German homeland has been reflected in the mirror of the tropics, this juxtaposition of images will but more sharply define the individuality of either landscape.

Towards the end of my sojourn in the country I lectured in Portuguese before the Agricultural Society and the Faculty of Philosophy in São Paulo; and I also introduced my German fellow-countryfolk in Recife, Rio, São Paulo and Buenos Aires, by courses of lectures and instructional excursions, to the flora and fauna of Brazil. Many who attended these lectures and excursions have assured me that they have now, for the first time, learned to love the new home which has revealed to them so many lovely and fascinating things, of whose existence, in such abundance, and so close at hand, they had never had any suspicion. In so far as this book proceeds a little further on the lines thus indicated, it has yet a third purpose: to be a book on Brazil for the Brazilians. Nature is here considered not by the critical eye of an outsider, but by a heart full of love for the sunny land; and the plants and animals are given the native names which the Indians have so aptly bestowed on them. The scientific denominations will be found in the Index, which is almost a handbook in itself, and which, I hope, will make it easier for subsequent explorers and scientists to find their way about, since in addition to giving the derivation and affiliation and peculiar features of plants and animals, it contains references to the principal authorities for those who desire to study the various species more particularly.

May the readers of my book learn to see the face of Brazil as the countenance of a friend! And when they have learned to love it,

P R E F A C E

may they also do what lies within their power to prevent its disfigurement, and to ensure that the splendid and individual flora and fauna of the land shall be preserved. In order to set a good example, I refrained, all the time I was in Brazil, as I refrained while I was in Ceylon, from ever firing a shot. And I can here assure the reader that the best way of understanding a whole country—as it is the best way of understanding an individual creature—is to love it.

KONRAD GUENTHER



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